



NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Contact: Susan Buchanan
(301) 713-2370

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NOAA 10-YEAR AQUACULTURE PLAN AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has released a draft 10-Year Plan for the NOAA Aquaculture Program. Through adoption of this plan, NOAA seeks to establish an improved system for regulating and monitoring U.S. marine aquaculture, develop new seafood farming technology, improve public education about aquaculture, and influence development and adoption of global sustainable aquaculture practices and standards. The plan is available for public comment until November 30.

NOAA developed the plan at the request of the Department of Commerce's marine fisheries advisory committee, made up of a diverse cross-section of public representatives. The plan identifies the program's goals and strategies, budget and staffing requirements, and potential outcomes, benefits and challenges through 2017. The public is asked to provide overall comments on the adequacy and appropriateness of the plan as well as offering specific recommendations for improvement.

"A strong marine aquaculture industry will benefit America's coastal communities with new jobs and revenues, and secure the availability of our nation's future seafood supply," said Bill Hogarth, director of NOAA Fisheries Service. "This plan provides a promising roadmap for how we will achieve our ambitious goal of increasing sustainable U.S. production of farmed seafood and meet the stock enhancement needs of the nation's commercial and recreational fisheries over the next 10 years, while providing environmental and other safeguards to protect wild stocks and marine ecosystems."

The United States imports almost 70 percent of its seafood, 40 percent of which is farmed. Hogarth said the United States wants more control over the safety, security, and environmental standards under which seafood is raised. The U.S. aquaculture industry, made up primarily of freshwater species such as catfish and tilapia, produces a fraction of global fish production. With a robust and sustainable seafood farming industry, the nation could reduce its \$8 billion seafood trade deficit by relying less on imports and increasing seafood exports. Aquaculture also has the potential to substantially increase employment and business opportunities in U.S. coastal communities.

President Bush's Ocean Action Plan called for advancing offshore aquaculture while ensuring they operate in an environmentally sustainable manner. The NOAA Aquaculture Program is focused on supporting farming of all types of marine species, for commercial food production, non-food uses, and hatcheries that will stock fish farms and enhance wild fish populations. In June 2005, the Department of Commerce forwarded legislation to Congress that would grant the Secretary of Commerce new authority to issue permits for aquaculture in federal waters. As Congress considers passage of the bill, implementation of this plan will ensure that NOAA's Aquaculture Program is well-positioned to take on the additional responsibility.

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The draft plan is available online for the public to review at: www.aquaculture.noaa.gov. Comments on the plan are due by November 30, 2006. To comment, send an e-mail to: noaa.aquaculture@noaa.gov; send a fax to: 301-713-9108; or send a letter to: NOAA Aquaculture Program, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13117, Silver Spring, MD 20910. The plan will be finalized and implemented in January 2007.

NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources and their habitat through scientific research, management and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

In 2007 the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, celebrates 200 years of science and service to the nation. From the establishment of the Survey of the Coast in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson to the formation of the Weather Bureau and the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries in the 1870s, much of America's scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 60 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

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On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

NOAA Fisheries Service: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>

Draft 10-Year Plan for the NOAA Aquaculture Program: <http://www.aquaculture.noaa.gov>